ARIZONA STATE VETERINARY MEDICAL EXAMINING BOARD
1740 W. ADAMS ST., SUITE 4600, PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007
PHONE (602) 364-1PET (1738) FAX (602) 364-1039
VETBOARD.AZ.GOV

Received 9/20/19

COMPLAINT INVESTIGATION FORM

If there is an issue with more than one veterinarian please file a separate Complaint Investigation Form for each veterinarian

PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date Received: Sept. 20, 2019 Case Number: 20-27

A. THIS COMPLAINT IS FILED AGAINST THE FOLLOWING:

Name of Veterinarian/CVT: Jodie Gruenstern

Premise Name: unknown (corresponded thru email)

Premise Address: unknown

City: unknown State: AZ Zip Code: _____

Telephone: unknown

B. INFORMATION REGARDING THE INDIVIDUAL FILING COMPLAINT*:

Name: Jo Elisabeth

Address: [redacted]

City: [redacted] State: [redacted] Zip Code: [redacted]

Home Telephone: _____ Cell Telephone: [redacted] (keep private)

**STATE LAW REQUIRES WE HAVE TO DISCLOSE YOUR NAME UNLESS WE CAN SHOW THAT DISCLOSURE WILL RESULT IN SUBSTANTIAL HARM TO YOU, SOMEONE ELSE OR THE PUBLIC PER A.R.S. § 41-1010. IF YOU HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THAT SUBSTANTIAL HARM WILL RESULT IN DISCLOSURE OF YOUR NAME PLEASE PROVIDE COPIES OF RESTRAINING ORDERS OR OTHER DOCUMENTATION.*

C. PATIENT INFORMATION (1):

Name: Beau

Breed/Species: Canine Lab-Pointer-Collie-Hound

Age: six Sex: m Color: _____

PATIENT INFORMATION (2):

Name: _____

Breed/Species: _____

Age: _____ Sex: _____ Color: _____

D. VETERINARIANS WHO HAVE PROVIDED CARE TO THIS PET FOR THIS ISSUE:

Please provide the name, address and phone number for each veterinarian.

na

E. WITNESS INFORMATION:

Please provide the name, address and phone number of each witness that has direct knowledge regarding this case.

na

Attestation of Person Requesting Investigation

By signing this form, I declare that the information contained herein is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. Further, I authorize the release of any and all medical records or information necessary to complete the investigation of this case.

Signature: _____

Date: 09/19/19

F. ALLEGATIONS and/or CONCERNS:

Please provide all information that you feel is relevant to the complaint. This portion must be either typewritten or clearly printed in ink.

Please see attached email and attachments.

Gmail by Google

Tracy Riendeau <tracy.riendeau@vetboard.az.gov>

Fwd:

18 messages

E. Trav-Stew [redacted] Thu, Sep 19, 2019 at 8:02 PM
To: Tracy.riendeau@vetboard.az.gov

1

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **E. Trav-Stew** [redacted]
Date: Sunday, September 15, 2019
Subject:
To: docjodie@drjodiesnaturalpets.com

Dr Jodie

I am a member of Saving Pets One Pet at a Time. I am looking for a veterinarian to consult. Kelly Bone recommended you.
My beloved Beau is my service pup. He passed unexpectedly. He robust healthy visceral. Never sick.

Jo

E. Trav-Stew [redacted] Thu, Sep 19, 2019 at 8:02 PM
To: Tracy.riendeau@vetboard.az.gov

2

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Jodie Gruenstern** <docjodie@drjodiesnaturalpets.com>
Date: Sunday, September 15, 2019
Subject:
To: "E. Trav-Stew" [redacted]

Hi Jo!
I am so sorry to hear! So many have lost their pets to the Vitamin D toxicity.
Are you looking for guidance on how to feed fresh, species-appropriate diet?
You can begin your holistic journey with my book, a link to purchase it is in the signature below.
An email consult is very educational and informative and is much less expensive than a phone consult.
It may be therapeutic for you to write your thoughts and concerns and current needs.

A phone consultation could be later this week and is $145 for an hour. Email I may be able to do tonight if you are able to pay a $60 invoice right away. Let me know what you prefer. I will send an invoice for either. Then I will send handouts and comments based on what you send to me.

Dr. Jodie
Jodie Gruenstern DVM,CVA
Certified Health Coach
Author of "Live with Your Pet in Mind"
Founder of Dr. Jodie's Natural Pets
"Promoting Ideas and Products
for the Natural Health of Pets and Their People"
Dr. Jodie's Integrative Consulting
iPAW 501c3 (Integrating People for Animal Wellness)

[Quoted text hidden]

E. Trav-Stew [redacted] Thu, Sep 19, 2019 at 8:03 PM
To: Tracy.riendeau@vetboard.az.gov

3
---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **E. Trav-Stew** [redacted]
Date: Sunday, September 15, 2019
Subject:
To: Jodie Gruenstern <docjodie@drjodiesnaturalpets.com>

We are putting pieces together and need to consult with a reputable, ethical holistic vet about what happened. No answers
[Quoted text hidden]

E. Trav-Stew [redacted] Thu, Sep 19, 2019 at 8:03 PM
To: Tracy.riendeau@vetboard.az.gov

4

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **E. Trav-Stew** [redacted]
Date: Sunday, September 15, 2019
Subject:
To: Jodie Gruenstern <docjodie@drjodiesnaturalpets.com>

Thank you
He is the love of my life
[Quoted text hidden]

E. Trav-Stew [redacted] Thu, Sep 19, 2019 at 8:04 PM
To: Tracy.riendeau@vetboard.az.gov

5

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Jodie Gruenstern** <docjodie@drjodiesnaturalpets.com>
Date: Sunday, September 15, 2019
Subject:
To: "E. Trav-Stew" [redacted]

I understand that you are very sad, how would you like to proceed?

Dr. Jodie
Jodie Gruenstern DVM,CVA
Certified Health Coach
Author of "Live with Your Pet in Mind"
Founder of Dr. Jodie's Natural Pets
"Promoting Ideas and Products
for the Natural Health of Pets and Their People"
Dr. Jodie's Integrative Consulting
iPAW 501c3 (Integrating People for Animal Wellness)

[Quoted text hidden]

E. Trav-Stew [redacted] Thu, Sep 19, 2019 at 8:04 PM
To: Tracy.riendeau@vetboard.az.gov

6

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **E. Trav-Stew** [redacted]
Date: Sunday, September 15, 2019
Subject:
To: Jodie Gruenstern <docjodie@drjodiesnaturalpets.com>

Are you able to consult re what happened? I have all his records but I was there and saw everything
Give your professional opinion with what we have? I did a new necropsy
[Quoted text hidden]

E. Trav-Stew [redacted] Thu, Sep 19, 2019 at 8:05 PM
To: Tracy.riendeau@vetboard.az.gov

7

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **E. Trav-Stew** [redacted]
Date: Sunday, September 15, 2019
Subject:
To: Jodie Gruenstern <docjodie@drjodiesnaturalpets.com>

Edit: not new necropsy just necropsy
[Quoted text hidden]

E. Trav-Stew [redacted] Thu, Sep 19, 2019 at 8:05 PM
To: Tracy.riendeau@vetboard.az.gov

8

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **E. Trav-Stew** [redacted]
Date: Sunday, September 15, 2019
Subject:
To: Jodie Gruenstern <docjodie@drjodiesnaturalpets.com>

He a vibrant robust crazy young pup
Never sick
Something wrong
He did not eat Hill's
Became sick after eating natural instinct raw boost and abound dry
[Quoted text hidden]

E. Trav-Stew [redacted] Thu, Sep 19, 2019 at 8:05 PM
To: Tracy.riendeau@vetboard.az.gov

9

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Jodie Gruenstern** <docjodie@drjodiesnaturalpets.com>
Date: Sunday, September 15, 2019
Subject:
To: "E. Trav-Stew" [redacted]

Do you have any other pets?
Is your goal to examine the past for peace of mind, for a lawsuit, or to learn how to do things differently in the future?

Dr. Jodie
Jodie Gruenstern DVM,CVA
Certified Health Coach
Author of "Live with Your Pet in Mind"
Founder of Dr. Jodie's Natural Pets
"Promoting Ideas and Products
for the Natural Health of Pets and Their People"
Dr. Jodie's Integrative Consulting
iPAW 501c3 (Integrating People for Animal Wellness)

[Quoted text hidden]

E. Trav-Stew [redacted] Thu, Sep 19, 2019 at 8:06 PM
To: Tracy.riendeau@vetboard.az.gov

10

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **E. Trav-Stew** [redacted]
Date: Sunday, September 15, 2019
Subject:
To: Jodie Gruenstern <docjodie@drjodiesnaturalpets.com>

No
He is my son
For all the reasons you would for human child
He ate raw his first year was fed high nutrition foods
[Quoted text hidden]

E. Trav-Stew [redacted] Thu, Sep 19, 2019 at 8:06 PM
To: Tracy.riendeau@vetboard.az.gov

11

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **E. Trav-Stew** [redacted]
Date: Sunday, September 15, 2019
Subject:
To: Jodie Gruenstern <docjodie@drjodiesnaturalpets.com>

He ate grain free + real foods (sardine meat veg coc oil herbs eggs and more)
Drank spring water
No chemicals- natural flea tick
Heartworm only for Winter months
No vaccines except rabies
[Quoted text hidden]

E. Trav-Stew [redacted] Thu, Sep 19, 2019 at 8:06 PM
To: Tracy.riendeau@vetboard.az.gov

12

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **E. Trav-Stew** [redacted]
Date: Sunday, September 15, 2019
Subject:
To: Jodie Gruenstern <docjodie@drjodiesnaturalpets.com>

He ate this way his whole life!
He ate raw first year
[Quoted text hidden]

E. Trav-Stew [redacted] Thu, Sep 19, 2019 at 8:07 PM
To: Tracy.riendeau@vetboard.az.gov

13

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Jodie Gruenstern** <docjodie@drjodiesnaturalpets.com>
Date: Sunday, September 15, 2019
Subject:
To: "E. Trav-Stew" [redacted]

I'm not clear on what service you are requesting from me.

Dr. Jodie
Sent from my iPhone
[Quoted text hidden]

E. Trav-Stew [redacted] Thu, Sep 19, 2019 at 8:09 PM
To: Tracy.riendeau@vetboard.az.gov

14

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **E. Trav-Stew** [redacted]
Date: Sunday, September 15, 2019
Subject:
To: Jodie Gruenstern <docjodie@drjodiesnaturalpets.com>

> Are you able to consult re what happened? I have all his records but I was there and saw everything
> Give your professional opinion with what we have on the cause/es? I did necropsy. Have no answers.

[Quoted text hidden]

E. Trav-Stew [redacted] Thu, Sep 19, 2019 at 8:10 PM
To: Tracy.riendeau@vetboard.az.gov

15

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **E. Trav-Stew** [redacted]
Date: Sunday, September 15, 2019
Subject:
To: Jodie Gruenstern <docjodie@drjodiesnaturalpets.com>

Too upsetting to write
Talking on phone is possible
[Quoted text hidden]

E. Trav-Stew [redacted] Thu, Sep 19, 2019 at 8:12 PM
To: Tracy.riendeau@vetboard.az.gov

16

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **E. Trav-Stew** [redacted]
Date: Monday, September 16, 2019
Subject:
To: Jodie Gruenstern <docjodie@drjodiesnaturalpets.com>

Are you able to consult?
Please let know
[Quoted text hidden]

E. Trav-Stew [redacted] Thu, Sep 19, 2019 at 8:12 PM
To: Tracy.riendeau@vetboard.az.gov

17

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: **Jodie Gruenstern** <docjodie@drjodiesnaturalpets.com>
Date: Monday, September 16, 2019
Subject:
To: "E. Trav-Stew" [redacted]

Hi
I am not interested in rehashing the past nor in finding blame with your local vet. If you have other pets who could benefit from what we discuss and make potential changes in diet, supplements or more holistic care like decreased vaccinations or raw food, then I would love to consult.
Let me know if you'd like to prepay for a $60 email consult. Then you can send me info about your pets, diets, supplements, etc. I will provide you with suggestions and handouts to help you with pet care.

Dr. Jodie
Sent from my iPhone
[Quoted text hidden]

E. Trav-Stew [redacted] Thu, Sep 19, 2019 at 8:15 PM
To: "Tracy.riendeau@vetboard.az.gov" <Tracy.riendeau@vetboard.az.gov>

They are marked 1-17

In addition this persons response made no sense. Jo has no answers. This person knew nothing about what happened - there was no local vet, and made willfully ignorant statements
[Quoted text hidden]

To Veterinary Investigative Division Jodie Gruenstern, DVM 20-27 September 29, 2019

On September 15, 2019 I received an email from a pet owner (Jo) who requested a consult. I have since learned she lives in North Carolina, I knew she was out of state. I am not her veterinarian, have never met her nor her deceased pet and have never done any consulting for her. I have never given her any advice. She was referred to me by Kelly Bone, the administrator of a Facebook group called Saving Pets One at a Time. Most members of this group have lost pets due to the Hill's Vitamin D toxicity. I was asked to participate in the group to teach pet owners about natural nutrition. I have made several posts in that regard.

Jo's first email to me (all are included in this package), labeled #1 was very cryptic and I was not sure what she wanted from me.

In my response #2 I expressed my concern for her pet loss and assumed that the issue was with Vitamin D, due to the referral source. I suggested that Jo write all her concerns and needs so that I could better understand what happened and what she wanted. I did not want to do a lengthy or undocumented phone consult. I tried to respond tactfully to avoid that. I also explained that my consultation is educational and that I provide handouts to facilitate the nutritional education.

In Jo's #3 response, she said she wanted a reputable, ethical holistic vet to consult about what happened that she had no answers. A red flag went up here for me, as I did not know if she was implying her local vet for this ill pet was unethical or if she was implying that I was unethical due to my charges, approach or whatever.

Her response #4 made no sense to me in the context of where we were trying to go with this, but in #5 I responded compassionately and wanted to keep a distraught pet owner on track so that I could be of service and not simply receive an abundance of grief-stricken comments. **I never even saw this pet or owner and had no knowledge of what happened as well as no payment for any services. I never received any records. I never received any correspondence other than these emails.**

In #6,7,8 she divulges that a necropsy was done and listed some of the foods the pet was eating. She still had not okayed a specific consultation, nor paid any fee and I assumed another local veterinarian had performed the necropsy. **(In her complaint to the AZ board she states that there was no local vet, who did the necropsy then?)**

In #9 I am trying to ascertain her motives, as I cannot "diagnose" long-distance without a face-to-face client/patient relationship. I felt pressured and wanted her to clarify what she wanted from me.

In #10,11,12 Jo continues to give piece meal info without stating what she wants from me. So, I ask again in #13, then in #14, 15, 16 she says she wants me to determine what happened and that she has records and wants to talk on the phone.

In #17 I try to explain the type of educational consultation that I can provide from afar. I fear that she wants me to build a case against another vet, and I have not even seen this pet, so I am tactfully trying to move this into a better direction without hurting an agitated, grieving pet owner.

RECEIVED
OCT 03 2019
BY:

#18, 19, 20 ,21, 22, 23, 24

Jo spews an incoherent, derogatory, defamatory tirade against me. She left these emails out of the thread that she sent to you. I did not respond. I contacted Kelly Bone, who made the initial referral to me to warn her to be cautious with this individual. She said she was already getting dozens of messages per day from Jo as well. She suggested that I not engage; so I thought that was good advice, so I did not.

It is hurtful that Jo states that I am "weak, rude, disrespectful, dishonorable", "sick", cannot stand for canines", "not a true veterinary physician", that I am "covering harm", "unethical", "shameful", "disturbing", "evil", that I have "contributed to deaths of pups", "should not be a veterinarian", "that I don't care", "heinous sick evil".

In addition, Jo's sister sent an email to me in which she stated, "what the hell is wrong with you and more..." I cannot find that email. I am fortunate that I have found this thread at all to defend myself, as I blocked the sender, marked as spam and put in the trash. (I never imagined I would need this, as she was not my client.) I do not need this emotional aggravation, especially from a pet owner who is not even my client. Re-hashing this now for this investigative purpose is very upsetting. No wonder so many vets are committing suicide.

Lastly, in the complaint (email to Tracey.riendeau@azvetboard.az.gov), I assume Jo is stating that "this person" (meaning me?) "knew nothing what happened and that I made willfully ignorant statements."

I would agree, I knew nothing what happened as it was never clearly explained to me, and my statements may have been ignorant as I could not decipher the cryptic phrases and requests. I wish Jo would have provided me with a coherent paragraph from the beginning as to what all transpired and what her goals were for a consultation. I clearly and respectfully requested that information from her as tactfully as possible several times. I also told her what my service limitations were. It is again stated in the complaint email to the AZ board that "Jo has no answers". I am sad for her, but it is not my responsibility nor within my legal ability to provide them.

I hope this clarifies this situation for your investigation, and in particular, I would like to draw your attention again to the 7 derogatory emails (#18 thru #24) that the complainant sent to me which were NOT included in her complaint as sent to you. These were the emails that caused me to disengage and likely precipitated her contacting the board as vengeance in regards to my discontinuation of correspondence.

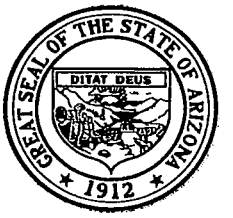
Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Jodie Gruenstein

(I plan to print and mail all this as well.)

P.S. I was unable to forward the emails properly. Please let me know if you need me to try again & let me know you received this. Thanks!

DOUGLAS A. DUCEY
- GOVERNOR -



VICTORIA WHITMORE
- EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR -

ARIZONA STATE VETERINARY MEDICAL EXAMINING BOARD

1740 W. ADAMS STREET, STE. 4600, PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007
PHONE (602) 364-1-PET (1738) • FAX (602) 364-1039
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INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

TO: Arizona State Veterinary Medical Examining Board

FROM: AM Investigative Committee: Robert Kritsberg, DVM - Chair
Christina Tran, DVM
Carolyn Ratajack
Jarrod Butler, DVM
Steven Seiler

STAFF PRESENT: Tracy A. Riendeau, CVT – Investigations
Dawn Halbrook – Compliance Specialist
Mary Williams - Assistant Attorney General

RE: Case: 20-27
Complainant(s): Jo Elisabeth
Respondent(s): Jodie Gruenstern, D.V.M. (License: 6821)

SUMMARY:
Complaint Received at Board Office: 9/20/19
Committee Discussion: 12/3/19
Board IIR: 1/15/20

APPLICABLE STATUTES AND RULES:
Laws as Amended August 2018 (Lime Green); Rules as Revised September 2013 (Yellow).

On September 19, 2019, Complainant reached out to Respondent via email regarding possible consultation about her dog, "Beau," and his unexpected passing.

Respondent offered options of consultation services; Complainant did not clearly chose an option and felt Respondent's communication was unprofessional.

Complainant was noticed and did not appear.
Respondent was noticed and appeared.

The Committee reviewed medical records, testimony, and other documentation as described below:

- Complainant(s) narrative: *Jo Elisabeth*
- Respondent(s) narrative/medical record: *Jodie Gruenstern, DVM*

PROPOSED 'FINDINGS of FACT':

1. On September 19, 2019, Complainant reached out to Respondent via email to discuss possible consultation regarding her dog that had recently passed unexpectedly. Respondent offered her services via phone consultation or email consultation regarding feeding fresh, species appropriate diets.

2. It appears Complainant wanted answers about how her pet died; a necropsy had been performed. Complainant stated the dog became sick after eating natural instinct raw boost and abound dry food.

3. Respondent wrote Complainant that she was not interested in rehashing the past or in finding blame with Complainant's local vet. If Complainant had other pets that could benefit from their discussions and potential making changes to their diet, supplements or more holistic care, like decreased vaccinations or raw food, then Respondent could assist via consultations. Complainant became upset at this response and felt Respondent's conduct was unprofessional.

4. According to Respondent, she participates in a social media group that has members that have lost pets due to the Hill's Vitamin D toxicity. She helps teach pet owners about natural nutrition. Complainant's first email to her was cryptic and Respondent was not sure what she wanted. By the third email, Respondent became concerned with Complainant's intentions but responded professionally. Complainant continued to give information regarding the dog's diet and that a necropsy was performed but did not approve a specific consultation or pay a fee for Respondent to consult.

5. Respondent stated she attempted to tactfully move the matter into a positive direction without hurting an already grieving pet owner. However, Complainant started writing derogatory, defamatory emails to Respondent, which were emails that Complainant did not submit in her complaint. Respondent stopped engaging with Complainant.

6. Respondent stated that she never saw Complainant's pet or Complainant and had no knowledge of what happened as well as no payment for any services. Respondent never received records or other correspondence from Complainants besides the emails.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION:

The Committee did not see a violation of the Veterinary Practice Act.

COMMITTEE'S PROPOSED CONCLUSIONS of LAW:

The Committee concluded that no violations of the *Veterinary Practice Act* occurred.

COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDED DISPOSITION:

Motion: It was moved and seconded the Board:

Dismiss this issue with no violation.

Vote: The motion was approved with a vote of 5 to 0.

The information contained in this report was obtained from the case file, which includes the complaint, the respondent's response, any consulting veterinarian or witness input, and any other sources used to gather information for the investigation.

Tracy A. Riendeau, CVT
Investigative Division